



**GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
Public Hearing**

Testimony on March 10, 2021

SB 1017

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox and Members of the GAE Committee

My name is Sue W. Larsen and I am the President of ROVAC and also the Registrar of Voters in South Windsor. I am here to speak on SB 1017.

There are many sections of this bill that do not impact the Registrars of Voters so I will keep my comments to the sections that do.

The audit of an election or primary, if passed, would now include absentee ballots. The Registrars of Voters will need direction on how to accomplish this. Those towns and cities counting absentee ballots at the polls will only have to include absentee ballots in the audit because the tabulator already has the numbers calculated. Most cities and towns use central counting of absentee ballots so I will keep my discussion to central counting. During most elections and primaries, the small and medium size towns use one tabulator. Cities and large towns may use more than 1 tabulator since they have many more districts to count. The Presidential Election is definitely a multiple tabulator event. In trying to look to the future, if no excuse absentee ballot becomes law, this will also expand the use of tabulators to count in an audit. ROVAC is not against this, we are looking for direction. Will SOTS want all districts considered or require registrars to report how many tabulators will be used and for which districts? If all tabulators are required, SOTS will have to allot more time for the audit process. Cities and towns that decide to do the audit manually due to fear of transporting the tabulators and ballots could look at increased costs with more audit counters or longer hours.

Supervised absentee balloting is a requirement that most Registrars do without any hesitation. However, we learned during the pandemic, attempting to do this would have been impossible. It is the right thing to do by allowing the Secretary of the State to suspend supervised absentee balloting under emergency situations. The health and welfare of the residents of the assisted living facilities and their staff along with the Registrars of Voters and their staff is paramount. Registrars will make sure that the

residents will maintain their right to vote.

The redistricting will be occurring this year or early 2022. Many towns now have GIS and can accomplish implementing the plan. However, not all do and ROVAC supports SOTS review of the plan once the town has finished the redistricting. We know there have been issues in the past that some voters ended up in a near by district simply because the directions given are difficult to interpret. A couple of examples are where a property is split between two districts or a street is split into 3 districts. Longitude and latitude are not something most registrars relate to.

There are many forms which can be electronically filed without impacting the transparency of the election. One example is the ballot order form. Currently we load the information in the EMS system but statutorily, we must send a signed copy to SOTS. ROVAC looks forward to working with SOTS to determine which forms could be electronically signed.

From a state wide viewpoint, it would be better if all elections were consistently in November. Currently there are only 4 towns that hold May elections and there are a few borough elections during that time also. ROVAC trains its Registrars and Deputies during spring and fall conferences which means these towns get the municipal election training at an odd time for them. Also, every other year, they do not do a canvass of voters the way the rest do. While the concept is that the election will clean up the voter list and you do not want to disenfranchise a voter 90 days before an election, there needs to be a consistency we all follow. Having said that, the municipality should have the opportunity to decide to move to November and alter their charters.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Sue W. Larsen
South Windsor Registrar of Voters
ROVAC President